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Marcos Plans Trip

Philippine Chief's 2nd U.S. Visit in 17 Years

By Donnie Radcliffe

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos has been in office for almost 17 years, but his state visit next month will be only his second official trip to Washington.

To prepare for it, Marcos sent his wife Imelda to town last month to confer with Vice President George

Washington Ways

Bush and CIA Director William Casey. Bush's office called it a "courtesy call." The presidential visit will mark her fourth trip here in less than a year.

The Philippine first lady, governor of metro Manila, minister of human settlements in her husband's government and new member of the committee that will assume power in the event of his death, also was in the Soviet Union last month on a "working visit."

About a month ago, Marcos also sent his wife's younger brother, Benjamin Romualdez, to Washington as the new Philippine ambassador. Romualdez, who helped arrange Marcos' 1966 visit, succeeds his cousin, Eduardo Z. Romualdez, and is one of a quartet of Filipino diplomats with ambassadorial rank as-

signed to the embassy. The others are here temporarily, just to work on the visit.

Also in preparation for his absence from the Philippines, Marcos announced on Sunday the formation of a 1,000-member special police force to patrol Manila. He said his action was in response to "intelligence reports that there is a plan for a nationwide strike, which will be accompanied by nationwide bombings and assassinations" in September, and perhaps while he was away.

Meanwhile, instead of hiring an American public relations firm to do something about the Marcos government's image problem as an authoritarian state, the embassy has beefed up its press operations here and since late spring has been publishing an English-language weekly newspaper called Philippine Monitor.

"Our side of some issues made against our president hasn't been heard," says one source. "We're trying to counter that."

About a dozen staffers have been pulled in from around world to serve as correspondents. They file their stories directly to Manila, where they say printing costs are cheaper. The tabloid is then flown by government-owned Philippine Airlines to the United States.

Right now the press run totals 50,000 copies, which are distributed

free of charge among the 1 million Filipino-Americans who live coast-to-coast. Once Marcos returns home, the Monitor will go commercial and solicit advertising and paid subscriptions.

Another commercial venture with Marcos government backing is a Georgetown restaurant. "We're encouraging private businessmen and we're lending assistance by helping them get food items," says an official. The restaurant is as yet unnamed, but a location has been chosen. If all goes according to schedule the restaurant will open for business in time to feed members of the Marcos' official party and any others who hanker for Philippine cuisine, which the official described as "a blend of Polynesian with Chinese fare, as well as Spanish dishes."